Game-Based Learning in ESL Classrooms:

A Focus on Gimkit and Other Apps

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Abstract

Classroom teaching efficiency is influenced by a wide range of factors, including teaching strategies, classroom dynamics, and increasingly, the integration of technology. Among the technological tools available, video games have emerged as a compelling resource for fostering engaging and effective learning environments. This study aims to explore the role of video games in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, focusing on their potential to enhance language acquisition, improve teacher-student interactions, and create enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences. Using a questionnaire-based approach, this research examines how video games can be integrated into ESL teaching to support cross-cultural language learning. By analyzing the impact of video games on classroom dynamics and learning outcomes, this paper contributes to the growing body of literature on technology-enhanced language education. It underscores the importance of leveraging video games as tools for immersive and interactive learning.

Keywords: English as a Second Language (ESL), learning efficiency, technology-enhanced education, Kahhot, Gimkit

1. Chapter One: Introduction

As a well-established and widely embraced digital medium, video games offer extensive insights into user interface design, aesthetics, and interactivity. Over the years, video games have consistently been at the forefront of technological innovation. They have pioneered advancements such as fostering online communities, creating immersive environments, and enabling dynamic, real-time interactions through internet streaming. Examining modern video games reveals the impressive capabilities of current technology, with their sophisticated interfaces and high production quality serving as inspiration for future designs (Squire, 2003). The New Yorker recently reported on the unprecedented rise of GameStop's stock in the interactive gaming industry, which captured global attention. As noted in the article:

It's not just you. What's going on with GameStop's stock doesn't make sense to a lot of people. The struggling interactive gaming retailer's stock has been making stupefying moves this month, wild enough to raise concerns from professional investors on Wall Street to the hallways of regulators and the White House in Washington. (BBC, Stan Choe, 2021)

The integration of video games into educational contexts has sparked growing interest among researchers and educators, particularly in fields such as ESL teaching. The dynamic and interactive nature of video games offers unique opportunities to enhance language learning by engaging students in immersive and enjoyable experiences. As video games become more embedded in various aspects of society, their impact extends beyond entertainment, influencing areas such as education and even economics.

In this paper I examine the functions of interactive gaming in educational research, especially in the ESL environment. I will offer the use of an interactive quiz platform as a game example and argue that the educational potential of games has been overlooked by educators.

1.1 Background of the Study

Interactive gaming has evolved into a multifaceted medium that not only entertains but also serves as a valuable tool for academic exploration and educational advancement. Scholars such as James P. Gee and Mark P. Wolf have recognized that interactive gaming represents a new form of interactive media, deserving of multidisciplinary study for its potential to transform learning (Quijano Cruz, 2007). The integration of gaming into education aligns well with constructivist theories, which emphasize active, experiential, and collaborative learning (Bruner, 1966; Kolb, 1984). Interactive games, with their challenges, cycles of feedback, and multiplayer environments, embody these principles by creating immersive opportunities for problem-solving and collaboration (Baierschmidt, 2012).

The rapid advancements in video game technology have opened new pathways for integrating digital tools into ESL education. Enhanced sound design, sophisticated graphics, and intricate game mechanics now enable learners to explore immersive virtual environments that simulate real-world interactions and problem-solving scenarios. Modern games, such as Civilization and Age of Empires, allow players to develop strategic thinking while managing complex civilizations, while role-playing games such as Final Fantasy VIII foster narrative engagement and language comprehension. Simulations such as The Sims provide opportunities for language learners to practice conversational skills in realistic yet low-stakes settings. By creating these interactive "microworlds," video games encourage collaboration, critical thinking, and engagement, aligning well with constructivist learning theories that prioritize active and experiential learning (Squire, 2003).

The integration of games into education has been an interesting topic for decades, beginning with the exploration of non-digital games in the 1960s as tools for enhancing learning (Cruickshank & Telfer, 1980). With advancements in gaming technology, this interest has evolved to include digital games, particularly as their use has expanded in U.S. higher education (Marklein, 2011). Modern digital games are celebrated for embedding effective teaching principles through immersive and interactive experiences. Gee (2007) emphasized how games serve as innovative educational models, offering dynamic frameworks for teaching language and problem-solving skills. Shaffer (2006) highlighted their capacity to encourage critical and creative thinking, aligning with the goals of second-language acquisition. Moreover, Whitton (2010) demonstrated their potential in adult education, presenting examples in which video games enriched teaching methods and assessment strategies.

Watty et al. (2016) observed that, despite progress, educational environments still face challenges in overcoming resistance to adopting new technologies. The potential of digital games, however, is undeniable. As gaming technology advances, its use in education is expanding, creating opportunities to make learning more interactive, dynamic, and impactful.

1.2 Problem Statement: Obstacles to Adopting Digital Games in ESL Classrooms

Swartout (2013) declared that, in the digital age, students have grown up surrounded by a wide variety of technologies, ranging from television and computers to smartphones and other mobile devices. Lotherington and Jenson (2011) noted that the integration of current and emerging digital tools in adult ESL education had not been widely adopted. According to Brown (2007) and Parrish (2004), a key challenge to incorporating these digital tools into ESL instruction was the concern that educators perceive their integration as complex, Additionally, some ESL program managers and instructors, as indicated by Gamble (2013), believe that their learners are either too old to adopt digital tools or lack access to computers or reliable internet connectivity.

2. Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Advancement of Educational Video Games

During the 1980s, educators began to see the potential in creating engaging, dynamic environments that encourage active learning, many of which are now central to student-centered teaching approaches (Jonassen & Land, 2000). The use of interactive gaming in education has grown significantly, as it resonates with the social and emotional experiences of children and teenagers, providing an enjoyable and familiar activity that can facilitate learning (Anderson et al., 2008; Gee, 2007a). With the vast majority of teens in the United States (97%) playing interactive games regularly (Granic et al., 2014; Lenhart et al., 2008), educators are presented with a valuable opportunity to connect with students through a widely popular and relatable medium (Horowitz, 2009). Pereira (2013) noted that digital games, often called interactive gaming, were increasingly regarded as valid educational tools. Prensky (2007) pointed out that the field of digital-game-based learning (DGBL) was rapidly growing, with video games becoming an increasingly recognized and effective method for education. Researchers such as Mubieek (2003), Prensky (2007), and Shokri & Abdolmanafi-Rokni (2014) have stressed the importance of integrating interactive gaming into educational settings to achieve diverse learning goals. A case in point is the use of The Walking Dead, an adventure game, in a

study exploring its role in helping English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Iran better understand speech acts like apology and requests (Baierschmidt, 2013). All of these have shown that the integration of gaming into student-centered environments can enhance both motivation and educational outcomes.

2.2 Games in ESL Classrooms

Horowitz (2009) noted that digital tools had offered significant advantages since the late 1980s, such as enabling communication through text and voice chat, allowing for personalized avatars, and incorporating interactive goals. These features have been shown to improve the learning experience for students learning ESL. Over time, new approaches like computer-assisted language learning (CALL) have emerged, and the field has expanded, with dedicated journals and conferences now available for those involved in digital language education (Thorne et al., 2009). Levy (1997) defined CALL as the study of computer applications in language teaching and education, and the field has continually evolved to include various tools, such as blogs, social media, podcasting, and even virtual worlds found in online multiplayer games. Research has shown that ESL learners are often more motivated to communicate in English when engaging in virtual worlds, such as the popular online game World of Warcraft (Reinders & Wattana, 2011).

2.3 The Positive Impact of Digital Games on ESL Learning

In the context of ESL education, several studies have suggested that digital games can significantly enhance language learning. For example, Rankin et al. (2006) conducted a pilot study using the online game EverQuest 2 and found that university ESL students picked up vocabulary incidentally and gained more confidence in their English skills. This was linked to increased interactions with native speakers through in-game chat functions. In a similar study, Miller and Hegelheimer (2006) used The Sims with 18 university ESL students and demonstrated that adapting a commercial game for language learning, along with providing supplementary materials, resulted in a significant increase in vocabulary acquisition. Ranalli (2008) later confirmed these findings in a follow-up study. More recently, Reinders and Wattana (2012) explored Ragnarok Online and showed that adapting commercial games can boost learners' willingness to communicate in English. Moreover, a study by Suh et al. (2010) revealed that elementary school ESL learners who used an educational multiplayer online game exhibited greater improvements in listening, reading, and writing skills compared to a group that participated in traditional classroom learning.

Graw-Hill (2001), along with Kirriemuir and McFarlane, argued that computer and video games represent one of the most engaging pastimes in human history. Video games, as interactive and authentic digital tools, are gaining increased attention from educators due to their potential to enhance EFL listening skills. By integrating audio lessons with visual feedback and interaction, video games provide a multisensory approach to language learning, which research suggests can support critical thinking and advanced learning skills in classrooms (Anderson et al., 2008). Additionally, Yaafouri (2019) stressed that educational video games, when well-designed, scaffold learning by gradually increasing challenges. For English Language Learners (ELLs), video games incorporate visual imagery, physical movement, and repetitive practice that not only promote mastery but also diminish the fear of failure.

Several educators consider video games to be highly motivating digital platforms and explore how their motivational elements can inform instructional design (Bowman, 1982; Bracey, 1992; Driskell & Dwyer, 1984). Horowitz (2019) indicated that online multiplayer video games provide informal, low-pressure environments where English learners can practice communication skills without the anxiety associated with formal classroom evaluations. Such settings align with the goal of reducing fear and increasing motivation, which is essential for ESL instruction, particularly in regions like Puerto Rico (Ortiz, 2010). These digital environments also offer opportunities for learners to engage with English in authentic and meaningful ways, especially where real-world practice is unavailable.

Horowitz (2019) further noted that video games foster immersive experiences that simulate real-life situations, enabling learners to apply their knowledge in practical contexts. Such informal settings encourage creativity and exploration, which can improve learners' perceptions of their language abilities. In a study of video gamers aged 12 to 18, Moline (2010) found that they viewed their gaming experiences as constructive and rewarding due to their problem-solving nature. Gamers reported using strategic thinking, critical evaluation, and moral decision-making, which they later translated into real-world scenarios. These cognitive processes often mirrored the steps required to manipulate in-game menus and actions, suggesting that such strategies could serve as valuable scripts for ESL learners when navigating second-language communication challenges (Horowitz, 2019).

2.4 Examples of ESL Video Games—Adventure Games

Adventure games, known for their immersive narratives and interactive gameplay, offer significant potential in ESL classrooms. These games typically require players to navigate virtual worlds, solve puzzles, and engage in dialogue with characters, which can foster language acquisition in an engaging and contextualized manner. For instance, games like The Legend of Zelda or Minecraft: Story Mode incorporate storytelling elements that expose learners to authentic English vocabulary and sentence structures. Bronstring (2012) emphasized that adventure games can be intellectually stimulating, offering thoughtful and engaging experiences while presenting players with mental challenges.

Figure 1. Phantasy Quest ESL. (n.d.).[Image]. Phantasy Quest ESL. Retrieved from
[https://www.spacepretzel.com/phantasy]

Phantasy Quest ESL is an engaging educational platform that utilizes video game elements to enhance ESL learning. The website offers an interactive adventure game where players navigate through various challenges while learning new vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures.
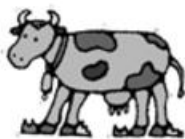
2.5 Examples of ESL games—Word Games

Word games help ESL learners develop vocabulary, spelling, and word recognition. These games are usually based on creating or identifying words from a given set of letters or solving word puzzles. They can be useful for learning new vocabulary, improving spelling, and enhancing memory.

2.5.1 Example: Word Search

Farm Animals

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r  s  h  e  e  p  t  w  z  j  i  g
d  i  c  h  n  n  s  c  w  j  d  t
o  n  h  k  h  t  h  u  u  v  b  i
g  h  i  p  f  n  b  m  p  k  k  j
v  h  c  q  g  g  d  e  i  f  f  k
o  e  k  s  o  o  u  q  g  f  g  q
m  x  e  o  o  a  c  i  k  h  k  p
z  g  n  f  s  t  k  c  f  z  z  c
x  q  h  g  e  l  h  o  r  s  e  w
d  w  c  a  t  j  h  j  c  v  a  r
o  s  i  s  b  d  o  s  n  j  q  l
u  a  l  h  f  x  u  k  c  o  w  j
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goat   pig   horse

cow   cat   sheep   chicken

dog   duck   goose

www.bogglesworldesl.com

Figure 2. (BogglesWorldESL, n.d., Easy word search: Farm animal)

2.6 Examples of ESL Video Games—Mobile Apps with Gamification Elements

While not traditional video games, these apps use gamification elements like levels, points, and rewards to teach English. They offer bite-sized lessons, including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation practice in a game-like format.
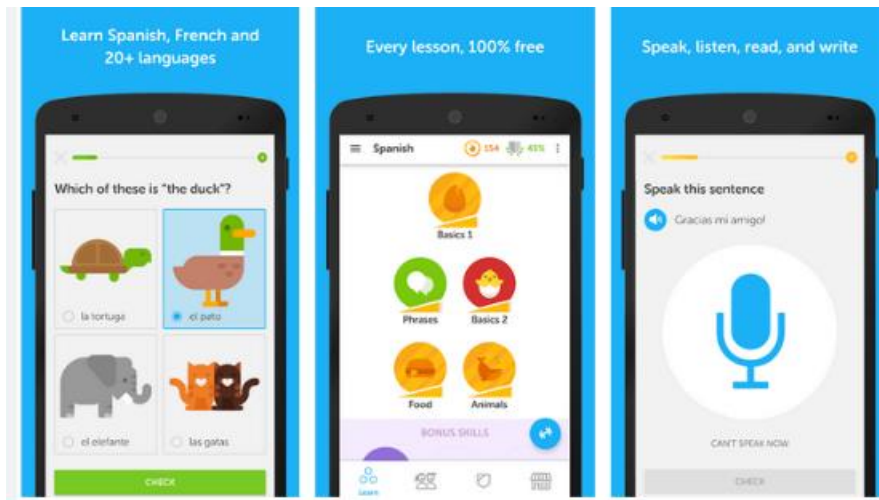
2.6.1 Example: Duolingo

Figure 3. (Duolingo, n.d.)

2.7 Examples of ESL Video Games—Quiz and Trivia Games

These games involve answering questions in different categories, which can help learners practice English by engaging in trivia quizzes related to grammar, vocabulary, culture, and more. Learners can gain a deeper understanding of language usage through competitive or collaborative gameplay.

2.7.1 Example: Gimkit

Figure 4. (Gimkit, n.d.)

2.8 Successful Use of Gaming Tools—Popular Educational Video Game App Quizizz

Quizizz is an online learning platform designed to enhance student engagement through interactive quizzes and gamified learning. The platform allows educators to create or select pre-made quizzes from an extensive question bank, enabling flexibility and saving preparation time (Technology Pursuit, n.d). Teachers can share results anonymously to give feedback to the whole. It also offers flexibility by allowing the timer on questions to be disabled; teachers turn off the timer, allowing students to think carefully about their answers instead of rushing. While this may lower the class's energy, it focuses on accuracy.

2.8.1 Kahoot

Kahoot is a popular game-based educational tool that promotes active learning by using interactive quizzes, polls, and surveys. It allows educators to develop real-time multiple-choice activities that students can join on their devices, encouraging engagement and friendly competition within the classroom setting. The platform is highly valued in educational settings for its ability to increase motivation, boost engagement, and provide immediate feedback to learners (Wang, 2015). Educators often utilize Kahoot for reviewing material, introducing new topics, or conducting formative assessments in a lively and interactive way. With features like a countdown timer, leaderboard, and vibrant interface, Kahoot creates an energetic and immersive learning environment (Plump & LaRosa, 2017). However, its emphasis on speed can sometimes lead students to prioritize quick responses over deeper critical thinking, as they strive to earn higher scores (Wang & Tahir, 2020). Despite this drawback, Kahoot's adaptability and ease of use make it a favorite tool for a variety of educational objectives.

2.8.2 Gimkit

Gimkit is a fun learning tool that mixes education with entertainment to keep students engaged. Created by a high school student, it lets teachers create custom quizzes and challenges for real-time competition. Players earn virtual money for correct answers, which they can use for upgrades. It is especially popular in language learning for boosting vocabulary and memory through interactive, repeatable gameplay (Schroeder, 2020). Like Quizizz, students work independently on their screens, but like Kahoot, they are racing against time or competing for "money." Each question is worth one dollar to start but can be increased by purchasing power-ups. Students can also purchase power-ups as insurance because they can also lose money by answering questions incorrectly, changing the colors of their screens, or freezing their biggest competitors (technologypursuit.edublogs.org).

2.9 Purpose and Research Questions

Learning during the COVID-19 pandemic required extra innovation and creativity from teachers, who must master technology, from the simplest to the more complex (Etheldredha et al., 2020). The use of technology in public K-12 education classrooms is widespread among adults, and language learning theories support technology integration in adult ESL classrooms (Lorna McClanahan, 2014). The purpose of my study is to evaluate the popularity, effectiveness, and features of online vocabulary-learning games in ESL classrooms. positive aspects of learning a language. Specifically, I aim to test the hypothesis that Gimkit is the most popular and effective tool for vocabulary acquisition among ESL learners. By comparing Gimkit to other widely used platforms, such as Quizizz, Kahoot, and Quizlet, I seek to understand how these tools contribute to learner engagement, vocabulary retention, and overall classroom dynamics. My findings will provide insights into the role of gamification in ESL instruction and offer practical recommendations for educators seeking to integrate technology into their teaching strategies.

2.10 Theoretical Foundation

Flow theory, proposed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in 1990, describes a state of complete absorption and engagement in an activity. This state, often referred to as "being in the zone," occurs when there is a perfect balance between an individual's skill level and the challenge of the task at hand. Flow is marked by intense focus, intrinsic motivation, and a sense of control, leading to optimal learning and performance (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

2.11 Rationale for the Study

I have organized this study into five chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction and background. Chapter Two analyzes current and relevant literature revealing the video games in ESL classrooms. Chapter Three consists of the methods and procedures I used to ensure validity and credibility. Chapter Four includes the data analysis and a detailed description of the findings. Chapter Five comprises Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for further research.

2.12 Researcher Positionality Statement

As a practical language instructor and a learner of English as a second language myself, my background and experiences inevitably shape my perspective and approach to this study. These experiences have provided me with a deep understanding of the challenges ESL learners face, particularly in terms of motivation, vocabulary acquisition, and engagement in the learning process. Additionally, my familiarity with various digital tools and their integration into ESL classrooms informs my approach to assessing the effectiveness and popularity of platforms like Gimkit, Kahoot, and Duolingo. I aim to be transparent about how my positionality influences the study's design, analysis, and conclusions, ensuring that the findings are both credible and useful to the broader educational community.

2.13 Limitations and Delimitations

This research has several limitations. First, the sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings, as participants were drawn from specific Chinese race language teachers, potentially not reflecting the broader ESL teacher population. Time constraints also limited the study to a short-term intervention. This study assesses only the practice of video games as part of the whole teaching process and so may not reflect the full assessment of long-term vocabulary retention and language development. Finally, the reliance on self-reported data through surveys and questionnaires introduced the risk of response bias, which might have affected the accuracy of the results.

3. Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Research question

Is Gimkit the most popular and effective tool for vocabulary acquisition among ESL learners? What are the most popular ESL video games that teachers commonly use in the classrooms?

3.2 Measurement

The primary data gathered to test the hypotheses came from two quantitative, Likert-style questionnaires administered online through a survey on WeChat. Participants answered the questionnaires through the cloud-based software service WeChat. It provides various methods for data collection through social media like WeChat.

3.3 Participants

I surveyed 15 Chinese colleagues who had been teaching in the United States for at least one year and had sometimes used video game apps to teach students. One American teacher also participated in the survey.

4. Chapter Four: Presentation of the Findings

Table 1. Quantitative, Likert-style questionnaires evaluating the perceptions and experiences of educators regarding Gimkit

Survey questions	Mean	Median	Mode
#1. Gimkit is easy to use.	1.53 (neutral)	1 (disagree)	1 (disagree), appeared 5 times
#2. Using Gimkit doing in-class exercises help students review the course materials.	2.73 (agree)	3 (agree)	3, appeared 7 times
#3. Using Gimkit is effective in enhancing students' engagement in the classroom.	2.8 (agree)	3 (agree)	3 and 2, each appeared 6 times
#4. Using Gimkit doing in-class exercises stimulates students' interest in learning the language.	2.6 (agree)	3 (agree)	3, appeared 9 times
#5. Using Gimkit doing in-class exercises is fun.	2.53 (agree)	3 (agree)	3, appeared 10 times
#6. The ranking function in Gimkit motivates students to study.	2.44 (agree)	3 (agree)	3, appeared 10 times
#7. Using Gimkit helps me concentrate in class.	2.66 (strongly agree)	3 (agree)	3, appeared 8 times
#8. Using Gimkit doing in-class exercises reduces test anxiety.	2.4 (neutral)	2 (neutral)	2, appeared 9 times
#9. Doing in-class exercises using Gimkit is more helpful in students' learning than doing in-class exercises on paper.	2.4 (neutral)	2 (neutral)	2, appeared 7 times
#10. Doing in-class exercises using Gimkit helps me know my students' classmates.	2.73 (strongly agree)	3 (agree)	3, appeared 9 times
#11. Doing in-class exercises using Gimkit reduces distraction caused by cell phone or other electronic devices.	2.33 (neutral)	2 (neutral)	2 and 3, each appeared 7 times
# 12. I would like to use Gimkit more in the future.	2.73 (strongly agree)	3 (agree)	3, appeared 9 times

0-strongly disagree; 1-disagree; 2-neutral (not bad, not good); 3-agree (I always use it); 4-strongly agree

4.1 Analysis of Table 1

Table 1 shows the survey results for all 15 Chinese teachers who had been using Gimkit in the United States. Overall, the results show that teachers perceived that Gimkit is a good tool. They agreed that Gimkit helps students to review (see #2 mean scores 2.73). They agreed that Gimkit helped enhance their engagement in the classroom (see #3 mean score of 2.8) and stimulated their interest in learning the language (see #4 mean score of 2.6). The results indicate that it helped reduce students' anxiety in learning the language (see #8 mean score of 2.4), helping them know their classmates (see #10 mean score of 2.73). They agreed that doing in-class exercises using Gimkit is more helpful in students' learning than doing in-class exercises on paper (see #9 mean scores 2.40).

However, in Table 1, I discovered an interesting result. For the first question, I assumed everyone would think Gimkit is easy to use. To my surprise, the mean was only 1.53, which suggests that the majority of the teachers do not think Gimkit is easy to use. Some teachers even responded that they had never heard of it before, but they would love to try Gimkit in the future. As you can see here, Gimkit was not known by this group of teachers yet.

The survey indicates all the teachers held a positive attitude toward Gimkit. One teacher commented: "It is an especially useful device for teachers in their efforts to motivate students to participate in class activities." Some reasons why teachers did not like Gimkit were the following: "I don't know these tools too much"; "I never use it so I don't know if it works"; "I seldom use Gimkit, but I am interested in using it. I like it;" "I do not know it very well. cause I have no idea what it is." As I noted, Gimkit is a newly released website. Most teachers like it after being introduced to it, but most have no experience with using it.

Table 2. Which app are you using more frequently in your teaching?

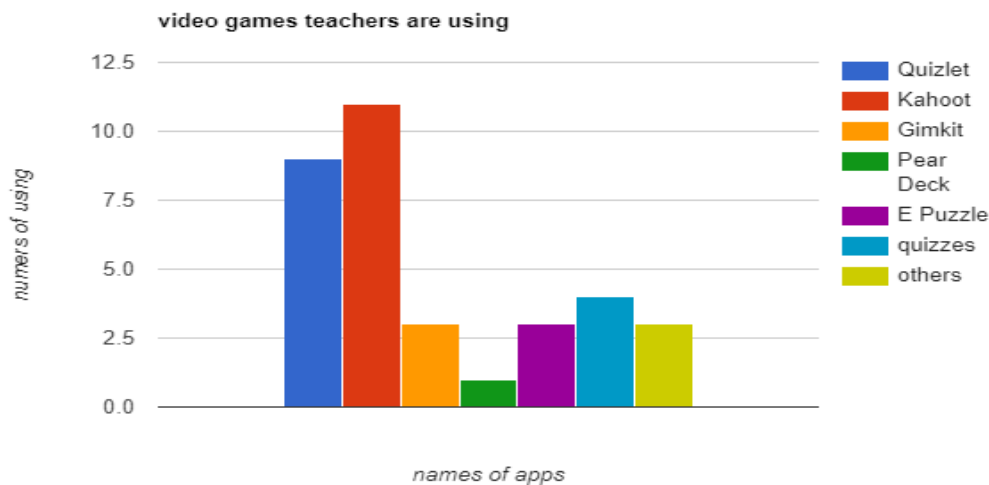| App	Mode	Percentages
1, Quizlet	9	60%
2, Kahoot	11	73%
3, Gimkit	3	20%
4, Pear Deck	1	7%
5, E Puzzle	3	20%
6, Quizzes	4	27%
7, Other apps you are using frequently	3	20%

Figure 5. The usage frequency of various educational video game apps by teachers. The chart compares the number of teachers using specific apps such as Quizlet, Kahoot, Gimkit, Pear Deck, E Puzzle, Quizzes, and others

4.2 Analysis of Table 2

Gimkit is a very good tool, but it ranks last. One reason for this might be that other educational video games tools can be used for free; Gimkit charges a high price to use it. Another reason might be cultural differences. As the table shows, the percentage of those using technology is not 100%. In the Others column, teachers use different ways to entertain their students other than these websites. It may take a while for teachers to fully adopt Gimkit for their classrooms.

Kahoot was the most popular app. Both Kahoot and GimKit are very engaging for students, although Kahoot appeals to the more competitive students. GimKit allows for questions to repeat on a random loop, allowing for more repetitions. Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizlet Live are free, while Gimkit is a pay service (with a very limited free version).

5. Chapter Five: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

5.1 Research Question

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the popularity, effectiveness, and features of online vocabulary-learning games in ESL classrooms. positive aspects of learning a language. Specifically, the study aims to test the hypothesis that Gimkit is the most popular and effective tool for vocabulary acquisition among ESL learners. By comparing Gimkit to other widely used platforms, such as Quizizz, Kahoot, and Quizlet, the study seeks to understand how these tools contribute to learner engagement, vocabulary retention, and overall classroom dynamics

5.2 Relevance of Theoretical Framework

Flow theory is highly relevant, particularly in gamified learning environments like Gimkit, Kahoot, and Quizlet Live. These tools often place students in flow by providing:

(1) Clear Goals: Players understand what is expected of them, such as solving problems or answering questions.

(2) Immediate Feedback: Students receive real-time feedback on their performance, helping them adjust strategies.

(3) Balance Between Challenge and Skill: Games often allow difficulty levels to match the student's abilities, preventing boredom or anxiety.

5.3 Kahoot vs. Quizizz vs. Quizlet Live vs. GimKit

5.3.1 Kahoot

A gamified quiz platform where teachers can review answers after each question, analyze class performance, and receive detailed reports.

(1) Key Features

Engages students with a dynamic experience.

1) Includes settings like Name Generator to prevent inappropriate nicknames

2) Contains unique features such as "Ghost Mode" (students compete against previous scores) and "Jumble" (ordering tasks)

3) Randomizes questions/answers and includes an iconic soundtrack (Keith, 2018)

(2) Drawbacks

Kahoot emphasizes speed, favoring fast processors and leaving slower learners at a disadvantage (Zhao, 2020). Overly competitive students may disengage after answering a question incorrectly, as they feel their chances of winning are diminished (Keith, 2018; Zhao, 2020).

5.3.2 Quizizz Overview

Quizizz is a self-paced learning platform that fosters individual engagement and reduces the competitive pressure of time-bound games.

(1) Key Features

1) Students work at their own speed, reviewing answers and receiving feedback immediately after each question (Basuki & Hidayati, 2019).

2) Its game-like elements, including leaderboards and memes, maintain student motivation while encouraging focus on content.

(2) Drawbacks

Quizizz lacks collaborative features, making it less effective for fostering teamwork compared to tools like Kahoot and Quizlet Live (Basuki & Hidayati, 2019).

5.3.3 Quizlet Live

It emphasizes team-based learning, encouraging collaboration while focusing on vocabulary acquisition.

(1) Key Features

Teams must work together to match terms and definitions, which promotes critical thinking and cooperative skills (Chien, 2019).

(2) Challenges

It may not appeal to students who prefer individual competition or faster-paced games like Kahoot (Chien, 2019).

5.3.4 GimKit

Gimkit offers a unique economy-based learning experience, in which students earn points or virtual money by answering questions correctly.

(1) Key features

The platform combines gamification with financial strategy, allowing students to "invest" their earnings to maximize scores (EdTech Collective, 2020).

(2) Drawbacks

Although engaging, Gimkit's popularity is limited compared to Kahoot and Quizizz, as evidenced in survey data.

5.4 Summary of Trends

The survey indicates that Kahoot was the most popular tool among teachers, with over 10 users adopting it for classroom engagement. Quizlet was also widely used, while Quizizz and Gimkit showed less frequency of adoption. Each tool has unique strengths, catering to different teaching and learning preferences.

5.5 Conclusions and Summary of Findings

The findings of this study highlight the significant potential of video games such as Gimkit, Kahoot, and Quizlet Live in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and engagement and in reducing test anxiety for ESL learners. These gamified tools align with flow theory because video games foster motivation and active participation.

The survey indicates that Kahoot was the most popular tool among teachers, with over 10 users adopting it for classroom engagement. Quizlet was also widely used, while Quizizz and Gimkit showed less frequent adoption. Each tool has unique strengths, catering to different teaching and learning preferences. Thus, while Gimkit was not the most popular video game tool, teachers appreciated the features of Gimkit, particularly its six interactive modes that display live rankings, fostering a sense of healthy competition and motivation among students. Many educators have noted that this app not only enhances students' focus during class but also helps alleviate test anxiety, creating a more supportive learning environment (Odally Comprehensible Latin, n.d.).

I suggest that teachers explore Gimkit more by using fun video games in the classroom. Many other new activities have emerged on how to actively engage students while they learn English. Methods that have emerged in the 21st century include comic teaching, clowning teaching, digital vocabulary teaching, and song and music teaching. Teachers could combine all the other newly released teaching methods with video games to make the classroom a fun place to learn the language.

5.6 Constraints in Gamified Technologies for ESL Learning

Gamified tools like Gimkit, Quizizz, and Kahoot enhance ESL learning but come with limitations. Overreliance on these tools can narrow teaching methods and hinder critical thinking. Features like rewards may distract from intrinsic motivation, affecting long-term language retention. Accessibility issues, such as paid features and internet access, can exclude some students. These tools often focus on isolated skills like vocabulary, rather than on comprehensive language proficiency, and their competitive nature may conflict with deeper learning goals. To address these, educators should use gamified tools as supplements, choose customizable platforms, provide training, and integrate them alongside traditional teaching methods.

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